

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAR ES SALAAM 1328

E.O.11652: XGDS (DECLAS 12/1/99)

TAGS: PFOR, OAU, TZ, PO

SUBJ: OAU LIBERATION COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY COMMENTS
ON DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL

REF: DAR ES SALAAM 1303

1. SUMMARY. HASHIM MBITA, OAU LIBERATION COMMITTEE CHIEF, DOUBTS ASSUMPTION POWER IN PORTUGAL BY GENERAL SPINOLA WILL LEAD TO EARLY INDEPENDENCE FOR PORTUGAL'S AFRICAN TERRITORIES. APPARENTLY TANGOV MAY HAVE COUNSELLED MBITA, HOWEVER, TO BE PATIENT WITH SPINOLA AND TO SEE IF POSSIBILITY INDEPENDENCE THESE TERRITORIES CAN BE ACHIEVED BY NEGOTIATION. WE ARE NOT SANGUINE MBITA'S, OR TANGOV'S, PATIENCE WITH SPINOLA WILL LAST VERY LONG. END SUMMARY.

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2. HASHIM MBITA, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN

UNITY (OAU) LIBERATION COMMITTEE SAID APRIL 30 IN DISCUSSION AT DUTCH NATIONAL DAY PARTY THAT ASSUMPTION OF POWER BY GENERAL ANTONIO DE SPINOLA IN PORTUGAL APPEARED TO HIM ONLY AS "BLACK CLOUD." HE DID NOT SEE "SILVER LINING" TO THIS BLACK CLOUD IN TERMS OF EARLY INDEPENDENCE FOR PORTUGAL'S OVERSEAS TERRITORIES. HE HAD NOT YET SEEN ENGLISH EDITION OF SPINOLA'S RECENT BOOK, BUT, FROM WHAT HE HAD HEARD OF IT, SPINOLA WAS SIMPLY SEEKING NEW METHOD BY WHICH PORTUGAL COULD RETAIN CENTRALIZED CONTROL OF ANGOLA, MOZAMBIQUE, AND GUINEA BISSAU. HE HAD NOT HEARD NOR READ ANYTHING SINCE COUP D'ETAT IN PORTUGAL THAT SUGGESTED ANY CHANGE IN BASIC PORTUGUESE POSITION TO KEEP CONTROL OF OVERSEAS TERRITORIES ONE WAY OR OTHER. SPINOLA HAD NOT MOVED BEYOND CREATION OF UNITED KINGDOM OR UNITED STATES. HE WAS NOT THINKING OF INDEPENDENT STATES ASSOCIATED IN FORM OF COMMONWEALTH.

3. I COMMENTED WE HAD RECEIVED VARIETY OF PRESS, RADIO REPORTS WHICH SUGGESTED DEBATE WITHIN PORTUGAL ON HOW TO HANDLE AFRICAN TERRITORIES JUST BEGINNING. OPINIONS SEEMED TO SPAN GAMUT FROM SEEKING, ON ONE HAND, TO RETAIN TIGHT CENTRAL CONTROL OF AFRICAN TERRITORIES, TO, ON OTHER, A LOOSE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT STATES IN WHICH ONLY "PORTUGUESENESS" I.E. LANGUAGE AND CULTURE, REMAINED AS BINDING TIES. DRAWING ON FBIS REPORTS, NOTED SPINOLA ACCEPTED PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PORTUGAL'S AFRICAN TERRITORIES, BUT DEBATE WITHIN PORTUGAL SEEMED TO BE ON TIMING AND SPEED OF APPLICATION THIS PRINCIPLE (FBIS KYRENIA 0976). THEREFORE IT WOULD APPEAR IN INTEREST OF AFRICAN PEOPLES NOT TO BE PRECIPITOUS IN MAKING JUDGEMENT ON NEW SPINOLA REGIME. SPINOLA SEEMED TO HAVE CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF DE GAULLE, AS TANGOV DAILY NEWS HAD RECENTLY NOTED (REFTEL), AND IF HE TURNED OUT TO BE THE DE GAULLE WHO EXTRICATED FRANCE FROM ALGIERS, AFRICANS SHOULD BE CONTENT. MBITA REPLIED HE FEARED SPINOLA MAY TURN OUT TO BE THE DEGAULLE OF GUINEA RATHER THAN ALGIERS.

4. UK HIGH COMMISSIONER KELLAS, WHO HAD JOINED DISCUSSION, OPINED SPINOLA HAD HIS RIGHT AND LEFT WINGS TO DEAL WITH IN PORTUGAL. HE MUST PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY IF HE HOPED TO ACHIEVE REFORM AT HOME AND PEACE IN OVERSEAS TERRITORIES. AFRICANS WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO GIVE SPINOLA CHANCE AND THEY SHOULD BE PATIENT.

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6. LATER AT SAME PARTY, INDIAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES PARTHASARATHY EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR TIP ON POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF REFERENCE IN TANGOV DAILY NEWS APRIL 29 TO 1969 LUSAKA MANIFESTO (REFTEL). CHECKING OUT POSSIBLE IMPORT THIS REFERENCE, HE HAD LEARNED THAT TANGOV AT HIGHEST LEVELS PREPARED TO SEE IF SPINOLA WOULD NEGOTIATE WITH CONCERNED AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND AFRICANS IN TERRITORIES TO BRING END TO WARS AND IN REASONABLE

PERIOD ESTABLISH TIME TABLE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION. TANGOV
ALSO URGING, THEREFORE, PATIENCE ON OAU LIBERATION COMMITTEE,
SPECIFICALLY, AND MBITA IN PARTICULAR.

7. COMMENT: IT IS DIFFICULT TO BE OPTIMISTIC THAT
PATIENCE OF EITHER MBITA OR TANGOV WILL BE VERY LONG LASTING
IN CURRENT SITUATION. LIBERATION FRONT LEADERS ARE FEARFUL, FOR
EXAMPLE, THAT AFRICAN "COLLABORATORS" IN TERRITORIES WILL MAKE DEAL
WITH PORTUGUESE CUTTING THEM OUT.
BEYER

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